

An aerial photograph of a vast, flooded landscape. In the background, a range of mountains is partially obscured by heavy, grey clouds. The middle ground shows a wide, muddy river or floodplain that has inundated green fields and some small buildings. The foreground features a large, dark, circular structure, possibly a bridge or a large well, surrounded by more flooded land. The overall tone is somber and dramatic due to the weather and the extent of the flooding.

# Flagship

Vol. XIII, No 4  
October-December 2003

## Autumn's Skagit Flood

**SPECIAL:** Iraq comings & goings

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## Commander's Notebook

### The path we choose

**Col. Debra M. Lewis**

*"The world we live in is the legacy of those who have gone before us. The choices we make in it create a legacy for those who will follow."—Stephen Covey*

In these notes, I plan to identify key messages affecting our lives professionally and personally, but not necessarily most urgently. Some of you may recognize Stephen Covey's Time Management Matrix Quadrant II activity here. Exactly!!!

Before I can do so, however, you might want to know a little more about me. For one thing, I find it very hard, perhaps like you, to find blocks of time needed to think about non-urgent but extremely important matters. There are so many distracters and urgent requirements swirling around almost everyone I know!

Yet, thinking is exactly what we are paid to do, not simply execute the tasks before us. Additionally (as my husband can clearly attest), I find writing one of my *most* painful activities. However, I work through it because I fully recognize the *power* of the written word—especially, when done *well*. "Well" is the operative word here. Unfortunately, I have a really hard time settling for something less than perfect in the result. Clearly, my writings are a work in progress! Yet I also know we live in an imperfect world, with imperfect information, delayed and varied direct or indirect impacts, and little to no time to easily clarify and simplify our messages.

Do all of us really know that communication is always hard? Ever confused others when giving directions? I find it especially hard to find the "right" words to reach and empower as many people as possible. Accordingly, I'm happiest when *anything* I may say, do or write helps others (like you!) realize their goals or aspirations. Did you know that your success very much affects everyone around you?

Linear thinkers reading this may be thinking—"Get to the point, already!" But I'd like you to consider something first. In the chaotic and interdependent world we live, will any specific end state I describe to you stay the same or will it likely change or move before you can reach it? I would ask you (and me!) to have more patience and trust in others as we all try to identify the "right" or best path to follow. Instead of me telling you, I'd like to know what is your most important message that would enhance your quality of life and the lives of others if they understood it as clearly as you do.

I know you've heard messages out there that can measurably enhance our daily dealings with others who come into our personal and professional lives. So why are they not really heard or acted on? Who

(Continued on page 3)



## Commander's Notebook

(Continued from page 3)

else needs to know your message? What have you, and those who do understand, done to make it as easy as possible for others to understand? If our important messages are not consistently practiced, what might be inhibiting them? I believe we truly have the power to change the way things are, but it often takes time and constant reinforcement. Some of us need only a gentle reminder or some other positive reinforcement to consistently practice what we desire. Others may need something much more to remind them daily, especially when the going gets tough, distracting and overwhelming living in the real world.

The Chief of Engineers has said "If not me, then who? If not now, then when?" I would like to thank our project managers for the time we spent together recently. Being around them, all of you in the district, and those we work with each day reinforces my belief there are incredibly talented and capable people all around us. I'm committed to spend the time necessary with you to recognize and stay on the path we choose to best serve our great nation and the special people in our lives.

*Debra M. Lewis*

### Letter of thanks for help from PUGET

Dear Colonel Lewis,

I just want to thank you and your department for the fast and excellent job you did removing the dock that had floated up on our beach...in two weeks it was handled. Considering you have to work with tides I am really impressed. Joe Gustafson and [PUGET Capt.] Bob [Kaiser], plus

the whole crew did a great job. they even cleaned up the beach afterward and got rid of the leftover Styrofoam....

It is a huge relief to have that off the beach because I was really worried that someone would get injured on it.

Sincerely,

Norm and Peggy Pritchard Olson  
Edmonds, Wash.

### Letter of appreciation for Ranger Perez

Hello:

We'd like to express our appreciation to one of your Rangers - Javier Perez.

...When we got to Chief Joseph Dam on Oct. 4, we were disappointed to learn that although we arrived at 2:30 p.m., because of employee scheduling, we would not be able to tour or do more than take a few pictures from just outside the gate.

When Ranger Perez learned how far we had come and that my husband used to work for Portland District, he followed security procedures and then offered to give us a personal tour of the powerhouse.

We enjoyed our visit very much and commend Ranger Perez for his professionalism and for his kindness to us.

William and Linda Kinman  
Canby, Ore.



**US Army Corps  
of Engineers** ®  
Seattle District



**Cover story:  
Warm autumn  
rains hammer  
Western  
Washington  
with October  
floods. See  
pages 10-11.**



**This issue was  
especially  
prepared for  
PUGET  
Captain Bob  
Kaiser and the  
Seattle District  
family.**

**Col. Debra M. Lewis, Commander  
Dave Harris, Chief, Public Affairs  
and Senior Editor  
Andrea Takash, Contributor  
Patricia Graesser, Contributor  
Steve Cosgrove, Contributor  
Maria Or, Contributor  
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# I was ashamed

By **Andrea Takash**

**D**riving down my street on a beautiful sunny day, I rolled down my window to enjoy the breeze. I was pleased to see children playing in the street.

I smiled at one little girl, expecting her to smile back. Instead, she stood there and scowled at my husband and me. I will never forget what happened next. She looked at us and screamed, “whites.”

For the first time, I had experienced racism personally. I was speechless. What did I do to deserve a racial slur? I didn’t know this little girl, and she didn’t know me. She is probably only 7 years old. But she hated me just because of the color of my skin. Even though this event affected me deeply, I know this is minor compared to the many acts of racism that occur on a daily basis around the world.

Where did she learn racism at such a young age? I thought about this question for days. I will probably never have a definite answer because there are many possibilities. Did her parents teach her to hate “whites,” or does she watch how they treat others? Does she attend a minority-isolated school where she isn’t exposed to other cultures? An even more tragic possibility is that she is a victim of a racist act.

For the past five decades, our society has tried to end racism through integration. Have we given up on integration? Has the hard work of civil rights activists like Martin Luther King been forgotten?

I don’t have the answers to these difficult questions. I can only speak on my own experiences.

Growing up in suburban Ohio, I never experienced racism. I read about it in books and watched it on TV. But I never saw it first hand.

My parents always taught me to treat everyone

equally. They exposed me to different cultures and people from various backgrounds. So I never understood why people were hated because of their skin color. It was never clear to me why society was so preoccupied with race.

When I found out that my great grandfather was a grand dragon in the Klu Klux Klan, I was ashamed. It has taken me years to accept this part of my history. I now realize his actions don’t reflect on who I am.

My mother was also ashamed of her grandfather. Her embarrassment drove her to teach my brother and me the values of treating people the way we like to be treated. Not only did she teach us not to hate others but also her actions in life reflected her teachings.

This brings me back to the little girl in my neighborhood. Even if her parents teach her not to be prejudiced, that is not enough. She is at a vulnerable age where she watches others and learns

from their actions. If they use racial slurs in her presence, she will think that it is acceptable. No matter how hard they try to teach her differently, it is their actions that have the most impact.

People are not born as racists. They learn it from their environment. Not only is it up to the parents, but also the community, to teach and show our children to respect everybody, no matter what their skin color.



# *Warm Welcome* **Ranger brings communication skills**

By Patricia Graesser

**W**elcome aboard to Air Force veteran Dennis Graham, who brings his diverse background in project management and education to his new position as park ranger at the Hiram M. Chittenden Locks in Seattle.

He has worked most recently for Washington State in the Employment Security Department and the Department of Corrections.

His abilities to communicate with diverse communities and promote programs are a good fit for the Locks, according to park manager Dru Butterfield. A Lacey, Wash., resident with two grown sons, wife Caryn, and a cat named Snickers, Dennis says he enjoys promoting activities for the public and the setting of the Locks.



**Ranger Dennis Graham**

## **Partnership to upgrade Riley Creek**



**From left: Lawr Salo, George Hart, Bob Rawson, Gary Bond, John Coyle, Gerald Clemons, Craig Brengle, Pam Yorozu, Joe Renn, Col. Debra Lewis, Dan Whiting.**

Seattle District team members and community members broke ground Aug. 28 for the Riley Creek recreation area modernization project in Laclede, Idaho. Once completed, all facilities within the park will be accessible for people with disabilities. The district, which owns and operates the campground as part of its Albeni Falls Dam facilities, waited to begin work until after the summer's camping season. Work will include upgrades to the restrooms, improvements to and repaving of roads and parking areas, and realigning the camping sites to allow easier vehicle pull in and pull out. The district also plans upgrades to utilities, trails, boat ramps, picnic and playground facilities, the beach area and the amphitheater. The Riley Creek recreation area will be closed for the 2004 recreation season while the Corps works to improve facilities and accessibility.



# Airborne LIDAR beam will probe the Puget Sound's deep, elusive secrets

By Andrea Takash

An airborne laser probed the Puget Sound's marine waters looking for answers. The fate of Puget Sound, in part, may depend on the findings from the light detection and ranging—LIDAR—survey.

According to U.S. Geological Survey scientist Ralph Haugerud, "LIDAR is a fairly new technique for creating detailed and accurate topographic maps with a laser scanner, which is mounted in a small aircraft. As the aircraft flies forward, a pulsed laser scans from side to side. The time required for each pulse to travel from the aircraft to the ground and back is recorded."

During the week of Sept. 22, the crew from the Joint Airborne LIDAR Bathymetry Technical Center of Expertise traveled to Seattle to survey the Puget Sound. The Center is a partnership in airborne coastal mapping and charting with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Naval Meteorology and Oceanography Command and National Ocean Service. The Center is based in Mobile, Ala.

The crew surveyed 50 square miles of the Puget Sound, an area including stretches of the Seattle shoreline, Skagit River estuary, Hood Canal and Port Angeles.



Media get a close look at the laser-equipped aircraft that will study Puget Sound.

This method, among others, will contribute data to help determine the priorities to restore the health of Puget Sound's nearshore under the Puget Sound Nearshore Project. The Puget Sound Nearshore Project is a

cooperative effort among the Corps, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, tribes, industries and environmental



Project Manager Bernie Hargrave talks to a reporter.

organizations to restore and preserve the health of the sound's nearshore.

"We're trying to map the areas that scientists believe are most critical for understanding the natural processes," said Bernie Hargrave, project manager for the Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Project.

"We've been able to map the beaches, and we've been able to map portions of the ocean," he said. "But the space between has always been difficult to measure. Land techniques don't get the water, and boats can't come in close enough."

There are two types of LIDAR: bathymetric and terrestrial. To collect data from the Puget Sound, the crew used bathymetric LIDAR. Bathymetric LIDAR uses a blue-green laser that records the reflected waveforms from the ground surface below the plane. The laser blinks 1,000 times per second and has a large footprint.

"It's a lot more complex and difficult to do this through the water," Haugerud said. "They need to use a more powerful laser to both measure the water surface and the sea floor."

According to Hargrave, "The bathymetric LIDAR will provide an accurate 3D digital picture of the Puget Sound shoreline, an area that has been inaccessible to conventional boat or land surveys."

It will take scientists about six months to create a visual map of the shoreline. Then they will begin looking for ecological trends.

"...a more powerful laser to both measure the water surface and the sea floor."

# Gruntin', sweatin', oldies, newbies, massage—lookin' good (optional)

By Jackie Hopkins

The end of the year often marks the beginning of a rigid exercise program as the Fitness Center gears up for the New Year with a new and evolving fall/winter schedule.

In addition to the regular fitness classes currently offered in aerobics, strength training, yoga and cross training, the center will also offer a variety of other services. One of the newest services that started in September is seated massage offered by Phillip Brooks, licensed massage practitioner. You can sign up for a session once a week with Phillip Thursday between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. The cost is \$17 per 15-minute session or \$30 for half an hour. Phillip, a graduate of The Brian Utting School of Massage, has been in the business since his 1996 graduation when he started his practice.

Class participants using the gym must first sign a form/questionnaire and meet briefly with one of the trainers. Contract employees working for Vivecorp under GSA are available to answer questions you may have on using the gym or starting a fitness program.

Anna Allen teaches step aerobics and incorporates some kickboxing moves into her hour-long classes. She has been teaching aerobics for about 10 years and has been a trainer at the Fitness Center for over a year. The yoga classes, also taught by Anna, are offered twice a week for one hour. "I love yoga as a form of exercise," she says. "It balances the body like nothing else." She also explains that yoga, like some of her step classes, can be very aerobic and is something anyone can do. She says a lot of people have preconceived ideas about yoga and think it's all about chanting and "folding yourself into a pretzel." Anna's style of teaching yoga, she assures

employees, is more about breathing, relaxation and building strength and flexibility. In an e-mail announcing one of her upcoming yoga classes she wrote, "Bring a flexible mind; the body we'll work on."

Matt Spies, who was employed as one of the trainers until October, had also been teaching several classes a week at the Fitness Center for just over a year. Energetic and highly motivated, he inspired employees to get excited about taking one of his group strength training classes working out with weights or one of his cross training classes. He said the number of participants in his classes varied depending on the season, but during the winter months things really pick up with an average class size of six to 10 people.

Matt says one of the biggest mistakes a person can make when beginning a fitness program is starting out too hard and too fast. Your best avenue of success, according to Matt, is to ease into it so you lessen the chance of getting injured or burned out. "A lot of people set unrealistic goals," he says.

So what is your best chance at success? "Find a way to incorporate a fitness plan into your life," he says. "If you try to change your schedule around your workouts, you'll just quit after a few months because

it's unrealistic."

**The Fitness Center offers numerous other recreational activities. These include volleyball, pickleball, pingpong, basketball, racquetball and Walleyball. The equipment is available for everyone's use and the free gym can be reserved for one of these activities. The weight room is fully equipped with treadmills, stationary bicycles, stair masters, elliptical machines, and free weights. If you are interested in signing up for a class or finding out more about the programs being offered, contact the Fitness Center at (206) 764-7663.**



From left: Linda Takunaga, Matt Spies and Sharon Ng.

# Fairchild Air Force Base: Revamped refueling wing builds for success

By Patricia Graesser

Two squadrons of new Boeing 767 mid-air refueling planes could be on their way to Fairchild Air Force Base, and Seattle District is helping to clear their way.

The deal is back under Defense Department and Congressional investigation at this writing, but in early 2003 the president proposed and by November Congress authorized the Air Force to lease and purchase Boeing 767 aircraft, which will be converted to KC-767 tanker-refuelers. Fairchild is slated to be the first of three installations to receive the KC-767s, which will replace aging KC-135s (the last KC-135 was delivered to the Air Force in 1965.)

Air Mobility command in August 2003 gave Seattle District the mission to initiate planning and design for Fairchild. The district's work would prepare for contract award and construction beginning in fiscal 2004—the first of four projected years of an estimated \$166 million worth of infrastructure development at Fairchild.

Once Seattle District received initial funds, program manager Andy Maser worked with a team to prepare an execution strategy and budget to accomplish planning and design with a combination of about 36 in-house folks, Corps technical centers of expertise, field investigation contractors, and architect-engineer contractor teams.

The first group of 767 refuelers are expected to touch down on the Fairchild AFB runway in August 2006. Ultimately Air Mobility Command expects to have two squadrons—32 planes—stationed at Fairchild, fully replacing the KC-135 fleet.

U.S. Representative George Nethercutt has said the 767 program “assures that Fairchild will continue to be the leading air refueling base for the United States...Bed down of this new system will require a substantial investment in military construction, providing an immediate infusion into the local economy.”

The anticipated 14-project construction program includes a combination of renovated, expanded and new facilities that must be complete prior to the new airplanes' arrival. Projects include hangars, maintenance



The 767 would be used to provide in-flight refueling to enable aircraft to meet global distance objectives.



**(Continued from previous page)**

training and simulator buildings, airplane parts and distribution facilities, improvements to and expansion of hydrant fueling, apron parking and ramp lighting projects, upgrade of utilities and communication features, and renovation and repair of selected roads and parking areas. Several of the proposed KC-767 military construction projects will be shared by Air Force and Boeing teams.

Because Fairchild's 92<sup>nd</sup> Air Refueling Wing will continue maintaining and flying KC-135 planes during the 767 bed down construction, phasing for renovating maintenance and supply facilities is a critical component to ensuring mission success. Once the active duty airmen are all flying the new planes, Air Force Reserves will continue to operate KC-135s at Fairchild, and the base will need to provide facilities for maintaining and refueling both types of planes.

Currently overseeing the work are program manager Andy Maser and project managers J.D. Brigance, Mark Lauterback, Mark Ortner and Pam Yorozu, who are working closely with technical on-site program liaison Dean Schmidt and a team of dozens inside and outside the District.

J.D. Brigance is managing the biggest project,

Building 2050, renovating a 1941 four-hangar, 500,000-square-foot building to maintain and supply 767s and meet current codes and Fairchild's exacting design standards. The requirements document for building 2050 alone is more than 1,000 pages long due to the complexity and size of the project.

"Bringing it up to code is probably the biggest challenge," said Brigance. For this 11-acre facility, "life safety issues include complex and extensive fire and fuel spill safety measures."

After a fast-track design and request for design-build proposal, Brigance anticipates that phase I of the renovation work on Building 2050 will begin in June 2004. Work is phased so that airplane maintenance and supply can continue in the building throughout the construction period.

Concurrently, the district team is coordinating with Air Mobility Command's environmental contractor (E2M, Hanover, Pa.), which is conducting the environmental assessment for the 767 bed down at all three of the gaining bases.

The district has executed \$1 million in planning studies to support project design and is designing the initial phase of the 14 projects—on schedule to complete all 2004 projects' planning and design for potential fourth quarter award.



**Susan Weber performs a Hawaiian dance with Julie, 4, and Sara, 6, daughters of Shawna Westhoff.**



**Mariachi band entertains special week's lunch crowd.**



**Monica Grosman**



**Francheca Gilbert**





Eric Winters (top left) and Lt. Col. Ed Lefler (above) scope the spectrum of inundation from an Army chopper, aided by maps.

# Fighting a mindless flood



Eric Winters discusses options with senior leaders Diane Parks, Chief, Operations Division; Lt. Col. Ed Lefler, Deputy Commander; and Mike Bevens, Deputy District Engineer for Planning, Programs and Project Management.





**Mt. Vernon citizens work with the Corps to save the town with some of the 337,000 sandbags distributed for this and other floods as the Skagit River exceeded its previous record by 14 feet. The Corps took over operation of municipal dams and kept the river from being eight feet higher.**



**John Pell surveys a huge logjam at the South Fork Bridge in Conway before ordering heavy jam-busting equipment. The logjam caused water upriver to put undue pressure on levees, threatening lives and property.**



# You're welcome!

By Patricia Graesser

Her pinched face stared at her reflection in the glass door as she opened it and then cautiously stepped into a vast, bright lobby, where beyond the imposing metal detector two armed guards welcomed her with wariness in their eyes. It was her first day on the job at the Federal Center South.

This isn't everyone's story, but it resonates with enough newer employees that a group of employees has focused on welcoming new employees more warmly and consistently.

Participants in three focus groups last year told the Recruitment and Retention

strategic team that new employees are not always made to feel welcome when they first arrive, nor are they each guided smoothly through their first year.

The retention sub-team determined that creating a welcoming team would be a way to develop a welcoming culture in the Seattle District. The Sept. 9 Recruitment & Retention team meeting incorporated the first gathering of the Welcome Team.

A new hire's impression of the district begins with his or her selection notification and continues with how they are treated throughout their firsts: first day on the job, first time traveling, first time using a government car, etc. Therefore the team's definition of "new employee" begins at the point of hiring and runs through one year on the job.

Participants in the Sept. 9 meeting shared their ideas for the Welcome Team and some of their experiences as new employees. The consensus was that Seattle District can be more welcoming of new employees by using new ideas and incorporating the successful processes that individual offices have into one standard process for the Seattle District.

The ideas for improvement they shared:

- **New Employee Advocate:** A "guru" for new employees for when a sponsor or mentor is not available. Someone who can act as a "guardian angel" for the program.

- **Welcome Packet:** A packet of information for those

who have been selected for a job and will be coming to the Seattle District Office (information on real estate/rentals, transportation, etc.) A suggestion was that this could be available online for convenience.

- **New Employee Packet:** A packet of information with health forms, life insurance forms, FAQs, computer account form, etc., to be given to folks on their first day.

- **HR & District Welcome:** Some folks indicated that the structure and reduced personnel in HR made HR feel unfriendly. Someone should be present to welcome new employee at the door and help them through the confusing forms and places to go in order to complete the HR "in-processing."

- **Pictures:** A comment was made that "people don't smile and greet new employees... Nobody says 'hello.'" One suggestion was to include a digital picture when the "swearing in" picture is taken of the new employee with the colonel. A suggestion to "introduce" the new employee could be made and posted on the web/Quickread.

- **Supervisor Checklist:** A checklist for supervisors to include all the things that should be addressed once a candidate has been selected for a job. For example – is there a desk for the new employee? Who will help or sponsor the employee? What about a phone and computer? Is there training that is mandatory prior to doing the work (i.e., defensive driving)?

- **Sponsor or mentor:** Assign someone to take the new employee "under their wing" and meet him or her at the door, show them around the building, show them their desk, introduce them to their co-workers, etc. Since the Learning Team has implemented a mentoring course and a number of folks have been trained, the Welcome Team may get help in creating a cadre of people to help.

Team leader Judy Smith collected materials, samples, ideas for assembling/preparing checklists and packets and shared them among the team. The team's next steps will be getting District Executive Team approval for their project management plan.

If you are interested in participating, you may call Judy Smith at x3501.

Take the new employee  
"under their wing," meet him  
or her at the door, show  
them around...show them  
their desk, introduce them to  
co-workers

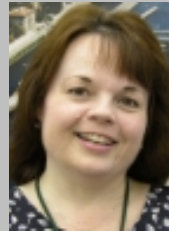
## Corps Chat

By Andrea Takash

When asked, “What do you believe individual employees can do to make this a better place to work?” district employees responded:

- Recognize co-workers
- Give BRAVOs
- Be a mentor
- Be willing to share ideas and solutions to management
- Take advantage of opportunities given to you
- Individuals need to take action; let people know
- Give praise to co-workers and tell their supervisor
- Celebrate success
- Be a good co-worker (respect)
- Be friendly/make it a warm environment (family-like)
- Be team oriented vs. turf protective
- Trust other people
- Compliment people’s work
- Take an interest in the work of others
- Take accountability for your own actions
- Volunteer for committees
- Invite others (outside your group) to participate in activities
- Fill outsiders in on the good things you/we do—have your 30-second commercial ready
- Share innovations/good ideas/simplified processes
- Keep informed
- Stop reinventing the same wheel
- Encourage people to think out of the box
- Involve the newer employees, get their new ideas, give broader picture
- Encourage entrance into Resumix to move around
- Introduce yourself to people you don’t know
- Remember people’s names
- Listen to understand one another
- Acknowledge one another
- Share good news
- Work to fix bad things
- Try something new
- Take new employees around; introduce around, show them the ropes
- “Spin” employees up on processes quickly to help maintain morale
- When you commit to something, follow through

## Nobody would guess that I...



**Shannon Chenoweth,**  
**Transportation Specialist**

“I moved about 100 times by the time I graduated from high school.”



**Avril Whitaker, Lead**  
**Administrative Assistant**  
**in Design Branch**

“I do hair on the side.”



**Manuel Bejarano, Resource**  
**Management Office Automation**  
**Clerk**

“I like to play guitar.”



**Mark Lauterbock, Project**  
**Manager in Military Branch**

“I auditioned for the reality show Fear Factor. I won a chance on a radio show contest in Portland. There were six contestants and the final contestant went to the show to compete. I made it through the first round. When I got to the second round it involved eating hairy banana spiders. The spiders were large and alive. I got one in my mouth, tried to chew it, but gagged and threw up. Needless to say I was eliminated. My ‘fear’ was met.”

# Ranger joins disabled vets hunting moose in Alaska

By Steve Cosgrove

**V**icky Silcox found the Chena River Lakes Flood Control Project and Recreation Area to be a long way from Seattle, in more ways than one.

There's the distance – a day's flight from Seattle to Fairbanks, followed by a 20-mile drive into the wilderness. There's the size of the office – you can count Chena Project staff on one hand with a thumb left over. Then there's the local wildlife. Seattle District only has one moose, the stuffed head of one, actually; Chena Project moose stroll through the employee parking lot and stop by the office for hot coffee and a Danish.

It's the moose that brought Vicky Silcox to Chena Project. Project manager John Schaake and park ranger Tim Feavel invited Vicky to provide special visitor assistance duties in support for a week-long moose hunt sponsored by the PVA – Paralyzed Veterans of America.

The Corps and the PVA first established a memorandum of understanding in 1996 to promote opportunities on and accessibility to Corps-managed public lands. The PVA later expanded its outreach with the Step Outside Program. This program assists wheelchair-bound veterans in getting outdoors to enjoy hunting, target shooting, fishing and other activities. Chena Project was nominated as a potential site. Douglas Warren, Associate Director for the Sports and Recreation of the PVA, visited the project and determined that it would be a perfect location for a PVA moose hunt for the three disabled hunters.

In 2003, Chena Project became the first Corps project selected to host a PVA hunt.

Park manager Vicky Silcox of Seattle District was a natural choice to provide visitor assistance to this very special event. As a former Corps park ranger at Libby Dam and Fort Peck Lake, Vicky had known John and Tim for many years. They knew that her visitor assistance skills were impeccable and that she had a tremendous affinity and passion for the great outdoors. Like John and Tim, Vicky fishes and hunts. In fact, she got a moose permit in Montana in 1997 and was successful in harvesting a young bull. Vicky describes her avocation best: "My husband and I love to experience the wildlife and outdoors! It is not as much about the hunt or the



**Vicky Silcox celebrates with fellow hunters and sponsors.**

catch as it is about the outdoor experience of the smells, colors, fresh air and seasonal beauty changes, as well as the opportunity to be part of nature in the wild great outdoors. Our dads taught both of us to fish and hunt, and they also taught us to appreciate and care."

Soon after arrival, Vicky settled into the routine for the week: up at 2:30 in the morning, at Chena Project by 3:30, and in the field no later than 4:30. Pop-up camouflage blinds were set out the night before to afford some shelter from the fall elements to the three wheelchair-bound hunters. Two volunteers, in camouflage but not hunting, accompanied each hunter, whose positions changed each day throughout the week. As it was cold and wet, volunteers provided hot beverages and snacks throughout the day. Each day the crew came in for a hot lunch, also provided by volunteers. Bev Fonterhouse, past president of a local chapter of the Safari Club International, had done an amazing job of recruiting these volunteers, lining up sponsors and resources, and arranging extra activities for the hunters in the Fairbanks area. Local support was extraordinary and vital to the success of the hunt.

Though the hunters didn't harvest a moose, everyone associated with the hunt deemed it a resounding success. They did manage to bag some ducks, and everyone had exciting and stimulating experience in the Alaskan tundra, where they saw wolves, silver fox and sand cranes. Of the definition of success, Vicky says, "The success of this hunt should be measured in the camaraderie among everyone involved, in the opportunities enjoyed by volunteers and hunters alike, and by all the people who were touched by this experience."

Chena River Lakes Project: [www.poa.usace.army.mil/co/chena/ch/intro.htm](http://www.poa.usace.army.mil/co/chena/ch/intro.htm)

Paralyzed Veterans of America: [www.pva.org](http://www.pva.org)



# Happy Trails...

## Retirement romance: 2 ceremonies in 1

By Dave Harris

Contracting Division Chief Kent Paul retired at the peak of his fun, after the busiest time, having enjoyed wrapping up another fiscal year.

“When the district is working hard to accomplish its work by an hour certain, it’s at its absolute best,” he says. “Everyone pitches together.” While others may see the hectic year-end as stressful, Kent sees just the opposite—an engine humming with no time for sputtering, gridlock or misfires that one might expect down the year-long road of human discourse.

So, the year-end bustle doesn’t faze him. “What bugs me is too much ‘help’—adult supervision from Headquarters and Division that can be distracting when we are engaged in heavy-duty missions,” he says. “That’s no time to be moving the deck chairs. I prefer to have our people focus on what we pay them to do and minimize their worries about where they will work tomorrow.” Kent will reel off a short district history, pointing out change all along the way, and concludes, “Our workload continues to increase every year.”

Folks who work in Contracting Division can see the results of their work change the landscape and skyline, as well as restore the environment. Kent says the highlight of his career is something unseen—upgrading the turbines at Chief Joseph Dam. Colonel Hall, then commander, told him, “Kent, this is your baby.”

New turbines had been installed, but at less than optimum efficiency. Kent somehow—with Counsel’s help—convinced the contractor to come back and increase turbine efficiency, which will improve electrical output for the next 50 years. Not only that, but the contractor was persuaded to pick up the repair bill estimated to be \$25 million.

That kind of big-league responsibility is what has sustained Kent over nearly 29 years in the Corps.

“Ever since I walked in the door as an Army intern, I had as much responsibility as I could stand,” he says. “It motivates people to be trusted and have the support of senior leaders who ask you to do great things. And I’ve never seen anyone shot when they don’t.

“I never envisioned in college that I would have responsibility for literally millions of dollars. I couldn’t ask for a better career, and I’ve never had anyone looking over my shoulder.”

Everyone adopts anchors along the way—benchmark experiences or lessons that become lifelong guides.

“Mom was my anchor,” he says. “Every ounce of common sense I have came from her. She was strong, funny and practical.

People around here say that I’m

calm, laid back, unflappable. That’s my mother. When I headed out the door for the Air Force, she told me, ‘I’m not going to worry about you. I know that no matter how you ruin your life, there’s going to be a lot of thought behind it!’”

Other than Mom, he can think of no single mentor. Kent says he can think of a thousand great examples of how not to do something, but most people were competent and professional, “and I walk away with a piece of every one of them.”

What does the future hold for him? Building a house on the Olympic Peninsula. Perhaps teaching.

“And a life-altering event. I will be getting married soon.”

**[UPDATE: Kent never did anything in a mediocre way. At his Oct. 25 retirement at the Fort Lewis Golf Club, he talked about teams, and a “team of two.” He said one team member had become more beautiful over the last 22 years, and then asked, “Mary, will you marry me?” At that point, a room divider rolled back to reveal a chapel. Kent Paul and Mary Higley then tied the knot.]**



Mary Higley and Kent Paul

# Adventurer-economist Jim Smith retires

By Dave Harris

Life turned out to be anything but dull for the retiring Jim Smith's 33 years in Seattle District.

The articulate economist hangs it up in time to hit the slopes and trails with gusto, still in his prime after a work life highlighted by a hot button issue like a desk raid and myriad plans transforming into a few good construction projects.

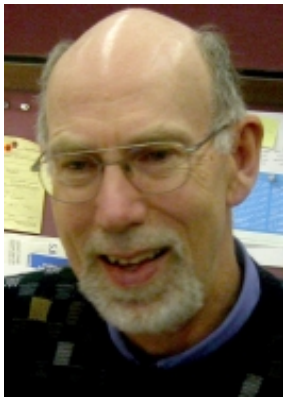
Jim recalls with laughter the time someone was reassigned from Frank Urabeck's group to Hydraulics and Hydrology with Norm McDonald. Norm assumed the desk was to come along.

Not on your life. Frank said, "The desk stays right here!"

After a major kaffuffle, Norm dispatched Les Soule and several

other young engineers to "go get that desk." Quick with a countermeasure, Frank jumped on the desk.

The desk continued to move and arrived with Frank continuing cross-legged to exercise squatter's rights.



Jim Smith

Jim said he was showing a new economist around. "This is not a typical day," Jim told him.

More than desks, what has intrigued Jim for three decades is that "civil works is one of the few federal programs in which we must justify our expenditures—the benefits accrued must be greater than our costs," he said. "If I'm proud of anything, it is the sound investments that we make in our water resource projects."

While musing about many plans that "never culminate," he said his most satisfying achievement has

been to "see a good feasibility study completed, move on to the Chief's office for approval, and finally to construction." He points to the South Aberdeen-Cosmopolis levees and the Long Road Dike Project as examples.

Jim said conflicts came as differences of professional opinion over the work, and were "not personal," he said. He admits to some frustration over the "grinding of bureaucracy that often seems to impede more than help." To illustrate, he told of the senselessness of not being able to take a Corps car home when it would save money to do so. No known connection to his retirement, but now it can be done under certain conditions.

He said he would not dissuade a young person from a career in the Corps. "There is a lot to be learned here and much knowledge that can be transferred to other career choices—it's a good place to start."

He just bought new skis, boots and bindings, along with a midweek ski pass. Jim and his wife, Rochelle, also plan a cruise to the Eastern Caribbean. Climbing and hiking round out his play times. "I'm in pretty good health. Better get out there and do it while I'm still able," he said.

## Skjelbreia has role in international news

Norm Skjelbreia, normally assigned to the Civil Design Section, Seattle District, currently serves in Baghdad, where he was called upon to help ensure safe crane operation when the first of four huge bronze busts of Saddam Hussein was removed from the roof of the former Main Presidential Palace in Baghdad.

In addition to his normal work in Seattle, Skjelbreia also serves as a structural specialist with the Corps'

Urban Search and Rescue Cadre and was deployed in that capacity after the bombing of the Federal Building in Oklahoma City and the strike on the World Trade Center in New York City on 9-11.

Skjelbreia's preparation for emergency missions includes hands-on training in the safe operation of large construction cranes.

*U.S. Army Corps of Engineers photo by Alan Dooley*



# Mike Atwell returns from tour with ‘adrenalin junkies’

By Dave Harris

Mike Atwell returned from a four-month tour of duty in Iraq, having tasted excitement with those whom he called “adrenalin junkies” mixed with times of boredom, but with utmost admiration for those serving downrange.

As a sector manager for water and wastewater, primarily in Baghdad but in other areas as well, he said he was motivated to help out in the Iraq Reconstruction Office, and he wanted to see what he could do to make things better.

Mike is a Vietnam veteran, having served with the 173<sup>rd</sup> Airborne Brigade. Even so, he said he was frustrated in performing the mission when “some nitwit” launched a rocket-propelled grenade or the noise disrupted his progress when Abrams tanks or Bradley fighting vehicles would move in because of a credible



Safety officer Ed McNamara, left, and Mike Atwell cool it under a banana tree at Al Hillah.

security threat and soldiers would evacuate and search the building.

Yet, Mike had nothing but praise for his protectors. “The GIs are great,” he said. “They put it on the line to take care of us and provide security.” He said his heart goes out to them as he saw them standing in the sun with discolored boots from the soldiers’ own sweat.

Mike said his most nerve-racking moment was when he rode in a transportation convoy only to discover that the lead vehicle got hit. The convoy, nevertheless, “pushed on through to a secure compound,” he said.

He said water and wastewater facilities existed in various conditions. In Baghdad and northern areas, they were in better shape, but the Saddam Hussein regime “withheld money from the south and facilities were often nonfunctional.”

Mike said he found Corps people “very dedicated” despite any risks involved. “It was most gratifying to see actual reconstruction start after all the planning and coordination.”

Quarters were a mixed blessing. Mike said that he and his team stayed in the “luxury” hotel Al-Rasheed, but that the structure was “worn out with carpeting and furnishings from the late 1970s” and with perhaps one of five elevators functioning. Mike didn’t have to fight the enemy, “but we were always fighting with the electricity in the hotel.” Sometimes guests were caught in the elevator—sometimes waiting in the heat to be rescued. Mike said he and his roommate simply crawled out of the elevator when it stalled.

Mike, 54, said he’d go back if it weren’t for family considerations—“It’s hard on the grandchildren.” His “day job” is that of a senior construction representative working at the Bunker Hill Superfund site in Idaho. He recommends that if employees contemplate an adventure downrange that they start early on immunizations and keep a record.

As for the risks, Mike said attitude and “how you handle it” makes all the difference. He knew high-strung co-workers, but he said he knew through experience and observation the key to steady nerves and productivity:

“Focus on the job. The people who are more laid back do better.”



# ‘One of them’—just call him Ambassador Bob Schloss in Iraq

By Dave Harris

**A**lbeni Falls Project Engineer Bob Schloss volunteered to serve in Iraq as a mechanical engineer.

“It was an interesting assignment,” he says, but he ended up perhaps being more of an ambassador to some of the Iraqi people.

“It was gratifying to develop a rapport and a working relationship with the Iraqis. Many of them asked me what life was like in the United States,” Bob says. “They were surprised to learn that my wife and I are taking care of my father and that many Americans have definite family values. They had a different opinion of us from American movies and television. They seemed to have a picture of us that was more free sex and Hollywood.”

He attributes some of his bonding success to his previous experience in the Air Force working with people of other cultures in Europe and Africa and the fact that he is, as he says, “old.”

“And my sun tanned face with the gray beard made them think I was maybe one of them.”

Bob tells of a Kurdish peace festival he attended during which he took pictures of Iraqis with himself. He says the festival celebrated the ousting of Saddam Hussein and featured elaborate native costumes. Bob got

acquainted with two retired Iraqi schoolteachers at the celebration. They were working for the Army as translators.

A few weeks later Bob met one of the translators again. The Iraqi asked for copies of the pictures from that event, saying that at his age he wanted to remember the events of his life and the pictures would be more important to him “than gold or even bread.”

Bob says the Iraqi engineers he worked with were very conscientious—“they were trying hard to do a good job.”

An Iraqi engineer friend had repeatedly asked Bob to attend his upcoming wedding. It was necessary to decline for security reasons. Bob presented him a wedding gift of \$65 from the American team. The Iraqi was thrilled to receive the gift, he says. “Sixty-five dollars was a week’s wage at that time for one of their engineers.”

Bob worked mostly in northern Iraq and says that when it was time to go home, his newfound Iraqi friends asked him when he’d be back. He says he didn’t know whether he would ever return, and that triggered a moment of intense emotion.

“I was sorry to leave them,” he concludes. “They were genuinely sad I was leaving.”



Bob Schloss relaxes among Persian rugs in Dahuk in Northern Iraq accompanied by little Kurdish buddies whom Saddam Hussein once targeted for elimination.

# Around the District Corps Family



Deployed in Iraq, Bill Graney talks to a reporter. Bill says, "The flame in the back of the photograph, has reportedly burned continuously for the past 5,000 years. Local legend is that this was the site of the fire furnace where King Nebuchachadnezzar attempted to execute Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the fiery furnace. It is a natural gas seep and was hot; however, at 10 feet away from it, I still think it was *hotter* in Kuwait City than by the flame, and 99 degrees here." See Bill's letter, next page. [UPDATE: Bill was close to a dining hall explosion recently; contractors sustained injuries from shattered glass, but Bill escaped any injury needing treatment.]

## Speaking Outreach

**Jack Kennedy, Gail Terzi and Kate Stenberg**, Regulatory Branch, presented a four-hour training session on the Corps' regulatory process to about 20 environmental permit coordinators from the Northwest Region of the Washington Department of Transportation Sept. 16. This was in response to state and federal initiatives to streamline transportation project development and review.

**Dave Martin**, Regulatory, gave a presentation Aug. 27 to NOAA Fisheries in Portland addressing Corps Regulatory Program jurisdictional issues pertinent to in-stream gravel mining activities.

**Joy Keniston-Longrie**, Seattle Public Utilities, and **Michael Lamprecht**, Regulatory, presented Oct. 14 a joint paper on the benefits and costs of implementing a Water Resources Development Act agreement where the Corps accepts funds from a

## Look What the Stork Brought...Babies!

**Kiley Rosalinda Ward**, to Maj. Steve and Mercedes Ward, Aug. 19.



**Nathaniel Poole**, to Military PM Thomas Poole and his wife, Maret. Nathaniel was born Oct. 10.



## New Faces

**Erik Lindstrom** is a DA Intern to Contracting Division and will be rotating to various positions in Contracting. **Howard Swims** is the new Chief, Budget Branch. **Stuart Stanger** is the new Chief, Civil Projects Unit, in the Planning, Programs and Project Management Division, replacing Jim Waller, who retired.

## In Memory

**James Edward Duke III**, 1926 to Nov. 12, 2003. Jim worked in Engineering Division at Seattle District and in Europe.

non-federal public entity to expedite the review of permit applications. The presentation was at the Water Environment Federation Technical Exhibition and Conference in Los Angeles.

**Tim Grube** spoke Nov. 25 at the Association of General Contractors meeting at their building on Lake Union. Overall purpose of meeting is to provide an overview of our expected workload and project safety.

# Kudos Kiosk

## Bill Graney's letter from Iraq

Among my 63 projects, the remodeling fix-em-up efforts that we are doing for three small schools on the Iraqi Northern Oil Company site where I am currently living has been a very small and simple project...but it has certainly been an inspirational one for me.

I was inspecting one of the schools where the construction was behind schedule and was supposed to be completed. I was a tad grumpy about it. While I was doing my inspection and coming up with my mental punch list of deficiency items, the Iraqi workers (most of which are Kurds in this area of Iraq) were hurry-ing to complete work on the flooring, but most of the work was done. I was followed around by the small construction company's president....

I went into one of the rooms where the carpeting was being laid. I saw the newly cleaned up and rehung blackboard that you see in the accompanying photograph. I, of course, couldn't read the freshly scripted Kurdish text on the chalkboard, but a couple of the fellows spoke OK broken English. As background, I am as you might suspect, always interested in what some of the banners that are hung in the areas I work, say..."Yankee go home"? or "Thanks"? or "The bathroom is down the right corridor"?, so I often just ask. To my surprise, all of the workers in the room bolted up to their feet. They explained that they had written it on the chalkboard for the school's children, "for their first history lesson," when they hopefully get back into the building for school (they have been all grouped up in a gymnasium for lessons) in a couple days. With joy in their discussion of the message, they explained it [with the help of an interpreter].

The text on the chalkboard says: "The First Lesson. The first day for the leader of the Iraqi leadership, the

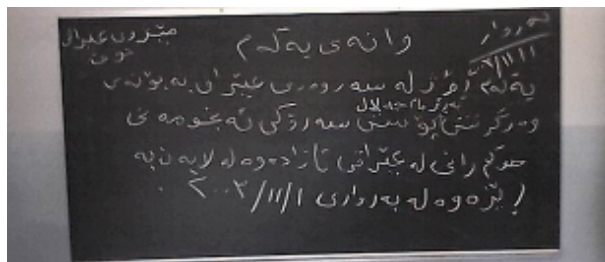
reception of Mr. Jalal Talibani into his term to preside over the Interim Government for the Liberated Iraq. 1st of November 2003. "They went on to tell me of the happiness that they have in now living in a free country that *could* (they know it probably isn't going to happen often) install a Kurd on the Interim Government Council (rotating leaders). Not democracy yet, but what a start!!! The workers and the company's president all expressed their feelings of respect and gratitude for our "American soldiers" who "have given us this opportunity." They stated that it was the start of a new Iraq. They apologized for their local Kurdish countrymen,

who in celebrations of Mr. Talibani's selection to serve as head of the Interim Government had been shooting off plenty of weapons in the area...which of course isn't exactly the brightest idea and thing to do in an area just a few notches down from a combat

zone...and of course if the firing was in the direction of American troops, one could expect that they would receive some return fire, which they did. But it was amazing to me to hear the company president knowingly explain that of course that was wrong of his people to celebrate that way and that "we have waited so long" for peace that they need to learn to celebrate in a peaceful manner. I am here as part of the group of mostly American government employees contractor personnel who are working with Iraqis to try to get their oil industry functioning better. But whatever our American and the British servicemen and women did and are still doing, whatever we the follow-on foreigners in Iraq are doing, *if* we do it to the best of our abilities and do it with respect and decency, those behaviors will be just as important as our hopeful technical successes.

I thought that you might want to see the simple message on a little Iraqi school's chalkboard of a people that now has hope!

Sincerely, **Bill Graney**



**Babylon's writing on the wall: "Yankee go home?"**

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